

136.OURFA: POSTSCRIPT TO A MEMORANDUM (DOC 141) BY A FOREIGN WITNESS FROM ALEPPO; COMMUNICATED BY THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF.

Towards the end of September, the Armenians in Ourfa were ordered to leave the town and to be exiled as the Armenians in all the towns of this region have been. They refused to leave, however, and finally orders were given to expel them forcibly, and, if they offered any resistance, to take the necessary measures. They entrenched themselves strongly in their quarter, built barricades, made subterranean passages from one part of the quarter to another, and generally took every measure possible to defend themselves against attack. A force of about 6,000 soldiers, including artillery, under the command of Fakhri Pasha, commenced operations against them, and their quarter was bombarded during the first weeks of October. The Armenians were all supplied with rifles and ammunition, and had even managed to obtain mitrailleuses. They had apparently sufficient food to withstand a siege of some duration. We heard about the middle of October that seven officers and about 400 men had been killed on the Turkish side. By some means or other the Armenians managed to obtain possession of Mr. {Leslie} and seven belligerents who had been interned in Ourfa. These eight men were retained by them in their quarter as hostages. Mr. Jackson reported the detention of Mr. {Leslie} to the Embassy, which, of course, took the necessary steps in the matter, and about the 20th October a telegram was received in Aleppo from Mr. {Leslie} reporting that he was out of the Armenian quarter and safe. What happened to the seven belligerents could not be ascertained.

The position of the belligerents who are interned in Ourfa is naturally somewhat critical. It has caused considerable anxiety to the foreign consular officials in Aleppo, and they desire more urgently than ever that these belligerents should be removed to some place where they would be in greater safety.

{A missionary of the American Board, and acting U.S. Vice-Consul at Ourfa}.

{ORIGINAL: Memorandum written by Walter Geddes forwarded in U.S. Consul-General George Horton to Secretary of State communication dated Smyrna, 8 November 1915. NA/RG59/867.4016/243. —A.S.}